



THE

KNIGHT



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COMMEMORATING THE MILLENIUM

The last of the three coins commemorating Lithuania's millenium was issued by the Bank of Lithuania on June 26, 2009. Like the 2007 and the 2008 coins, the 2009 coin has a nominal value of 100 litai. It is also 99.99% gold, 22.30 mm in diameter, weighs 7.78 grams and has along its edge 'LIETUVOS VARDŲ TUKŠTAMETIS', meaning 'Millenium of Lithuania's Name'. The coins was designed by Bronius Leonavičius and Giedrius Paulauskas.

A consequence of the complaints about low mintage and coins being sold out within hours, the mintage for the 2008 and the current 2009



millenium coins was doubled, to 10,000, in contrast to 5,000 coins for the 2007 coin. As a result, speculators have lost some of their enthusiasm in buying up all the coins immediately. The official price of the 2009 coin in a display box is 860 litai. Assuming the current exchange rate of about 2.4 litai to the US dollar, this translates to about \$358 per coin. Let's see at what prices it realizes on ebay.

On the obverse is the Vytis depicted in calligraphic form with LIETUVA at the top, 100 LITŲ 2009 at the bottom and the monograph of the Lithuanian Mint at the 3 o'clock position.

On the reverse is the beginning of the March 11, 1990 Lithuanian Declaration of Restoration of Independence: LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS AUKŠČIAUSIOJI TARYBA, REIKŠDAMA TAUTOS VALIA, NUTARIA IR IŠKILMINGAI SKELBIA, KAD YRA ATSTATOMAS 1940 METAIS SVETIMOS JĖGOS SUVARŽYTAS LIETUVOS VALSTYBĖS SUVERENINIŲ GALIŲ VYKDYMAS, meaning 'The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, in expressing the will of the nation, has decreed and is solemnly proclaiming that the exercise of sovereignty by the Lithuanian State, which was restricted by a foreign force in 1940, is hereby restored'. The text is in raised lettering, except for the phrase 'in expressing the will of the people', which is incused for emphasis - a direct counter to the communist propaganda that they represented the will of the Lithuanian people during their 50 years of occupation.

The legend of the coin reads LIETUVOS VALSTYBĖS ATYKURIMAS, meaning 'The reestablishment of the Lithuanian State'. At the bottom, is the incused Portal Gate (*Lith.* Gedimino Vartai), the arms of the Lithuanian Kingdom. At the top, and underneath the legend, is a monogram for the March 11, 1990 Declaration of Independence designed by Bronius Leonavičius.

This 2009 millenium coin is the 59th commemorative coin issued by the Bank of Lithuania and it is the first time that the Bank has issued a three gold coin commemorative series.

THE THREE MILLENIUM COINS

To better appreciate the three gold coins commemorating the millenium, they should be compared side-by-side. Although on the obverse of each coin there is a Vytis, the arms of the Lithuanian Empire, each is distinctive and each evokes a different feeling.

The Vytis on the 2007 coin is formed by contour lines, with the Vytis seeming to come out of the earth in the form of mounds (*Lith.* piliakalniai) - mounds which dot Lithuania and which were the main line of defense for ancient Lithuanians. In viewing this Vytis one wonders what stories of bravery they could tell. On looking at this



rendition of the Vytis, one wonders of what bravery these mounds might speak. On looking at this Vytis, one thinks of the very, very distant Lithuanian past.

The Vytis of the 2008 coin with it's damascene background has a renaissance ambiance about it, reminding the viewer of the glory days of the Lithuania Empire which stretched from sea to sea, when Lithuanians were CEO's not only in Lithuania and Samogithia, but also in Byelorussia, Ukraine and Poland and when Lithuanian royalty intermarried with many royal houses of Europe.

And the calligraphic form of the Vytis on the 2009 coin has both an ancient and a futuristic feel about it - an ancient feel because it resembles the haiku style of visual art that is sometimes found in stone age cave dwellings, yet futuristic in that it simultaneously reminds one of modern art. Taking these two ambiances together, this Vytis conveys a sense of a timeless Lithuania, one that reaches from the deepest past and extends into the unforeseen future.

The reverse of the 2007 coin, has a sentence from the Annals of Quedlinburg (*Lith.* Kvedlinburgas) as a spiral starting from the center of the coin going outward. The viewer has to turn the coin round and round as he reads the Latin inscription.

On the 2008 coin, Europe is depicted as a text from one of King Gediminas's letters to Hansanean League cities, and, the Lithuanian Empire is depicted as a listing of hallmark events in Lithuanian history.

4.
Here, the viewer has to read the Latin text of King Gediminas's letter, then read in Lithuanian the listing of historical events, i.e., perform more of a mental task that is typical in viewing a coin.

The 2009 coin requires the viewer to view the coin in one plane, then rotate it 90 degrees to read the beginning of the March 11, 1990 document. The viewer notes that the Portal Gate, the arms of the Lithuanian Kingdom, and the words 'in expressing the will of the people' form a unified element, suggesting that this ancient Lithuanian coat of arms, the Portal Gate, is directly linked with the will of the Lithuanian people.

Since the obverses of all three millenium coins require the viewer to expend more physical and mental energy than would normally be expected in viewing a coin, these coins have the potential of making a stronger impact on the viewer, in accordance with a known fact of human psychology.

Thus, the three millenium coins very successfully present to the world our history from its ancient past, through its glorious medieval and renaissance period, through the half century of foreign occupation that was a holocaust for Lithuania (1940-1990), and, to the joy of the reestablished Lithuanian Republic.

THEIR VIEW OF THE MILLENIUM

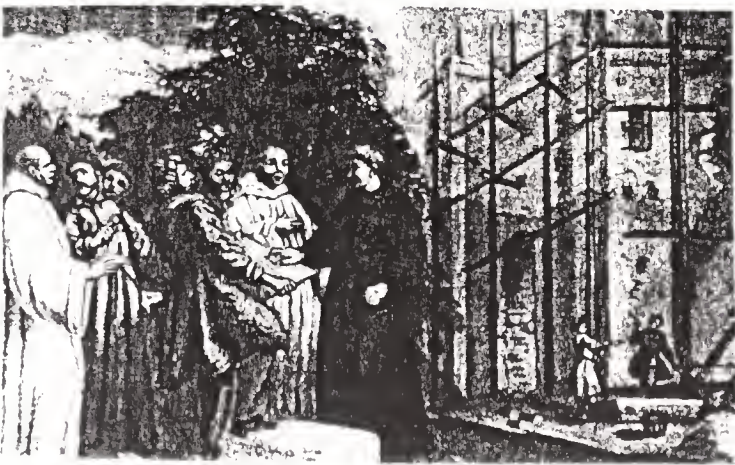
While commemorating and celebrating our double millenium, the first known mention of the name 'Lithuania' in a western chronicle and the first baptism of a Lithuanian king in the western rite, we should consider how our ancestors might have viewed the historical foundation of this millenium, e.i., how they might have viewed the introduction of Christinity to Lithuania. We should compare what we consider to be hallmarks of Lithuania's path to Christinity to what our forefathers might have considered important. This comparison is critical since not only do some modern Lithuanians place a disproportionate emphasis on the Catholization of Lithuania compared to other cultures, e.g. Czechs, Hungarians, Austrians, Latvians, Estonians, etc., but also because some numismatists base attributions of our early coins using the introduction of Catholicism in Lithuania as a critical backdrop, a perspective that is turning out to be unsupportable - based on new discoveries and on re-evaluation of inferences based on

previously known facts, i.e., the glass is half empty vs. the glass is half full.

One fertile domain to consider in looking for information on what our forefathers might have thought important are our ancient Lithuanian churches. The artwork in our churches speak volumes, we just have to find the churches, look at the artwork and ask questions.

Although the 16th century copy of the Annals of Quedlinburg was published only in 1710 after its discovery by Baron Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz of Saxony (1646-1716), there are at least 26 known chronicles in Western Europe which speak of Wojtech Adelbert (956-997) (*Lith. Vaitiekus Adelbertas*) and/or Bruno Boniface (974-1009) (*Lith. Brunonas Bonifacas*): 21 in Germany, 2 in Italy, 1 in France and 2 in Poland. It is not surprising that ancient Lithuanians were well aware of Wojteck Adalbert, Brono Boniface and the baptism of King Netimeras, as evidenced by the frescos of the Pažaisliai Monastery and a picture in the Kaunas Cathedral.

The Pažaisliai Monastery frescos, painted between 1674 and 1712, document the works of Wojteck Adalbert, five Benedictine monks and Bruno Boniface. And, there is in the Kaunas Cathedral a painting by Jonas Bielinskis painted in 1706 entitled 'The Triumphant Church' where Wojteck Adalbert and Bruno Boniface are portrayed in a group of the notables who worked to spread Catholicism in Lithuania. Below are fragments of this artwork.



Wojteck Adalbert establishes a Benedictine monastery at Brevnec, near Prague.



Woman brings fish to the five monks.



Bruno Boniface arrives in Lithuania.



Bruno preaches to King Netimeras.



Bruno beheaded by order of Zebedenas, the brother of King Netimeras



Fragment from the painting 'The Church Triumphant' in Kaunas. Bruno is depicted holding palms and Wojtech holds a bishop's staff.

So as to obtain supplemental and additional historical information left by our ancestors, Catholic and Orthodox churches, in what had been the Lithuanian Empire, should be canvassed looking for frescos, paintings or statues related to the introduction of Orthodox Christianity in Lithuania as well as the Catholic baptism of King Mindaugas, the papal ratification of Mindaugas's kingship, and for the designation by King Jogalia/Jogaila in 1387 that Christianity, Catholic and Orthodox, are state-sponsored religions in Lithuania. This canvass should also be conducted in as many churches of Western Europe as possible.

When you, dear member of the LNA, visit Lithuania, go to churches, Catholic as well as Orthodox, even obscure churches in the countryside. Ask questions, look for artwork depicting the introduction of Christianity in Lithuania. Our readership in Lithuania could be of tremendous help in this regard.

From what is already known and from what is still to be discovered, we may have to infer that our forebearers considered Vojteck Adalbert, Bruno Boniface and King Netimeras to be the starting point of Catholic Christianity in Lithuania and that the events associated with King Mindaugas and King Jogalia were only political highlights in response to German political and military adventurisms, adventurism which was intensified after the end of the Crusades with the fall of Acre in Palestine in 1291.

BALTIMORE RECOGNIZES OUR MILLENIUM

At right is a proclamation by the Major of the City of Baltimore to our Lithuanian Numismatic Association on the occasion of Lithuania's Millenium.



CITY OF BALTIMORE

Certificate of Recognition

*On behalf of the citizens of Baltimore, I am pleased
to present this certificate to*

Lithuanian Numismatic Association

*in recognition of your ethnic heritage's double
millennium celebration. Your outstanding service
to our city's Lithuanian-American communities are
sincerely appreciated. Congratulations, and best
wishes for your future endeavors!*



Presented this 8th day of July, two thousand nine

Sheila Dixon

MAYOR

2007 DARIUS-GIRĖNAS 10 LITŲ NOTE MAKES COVER OF CATALOG!

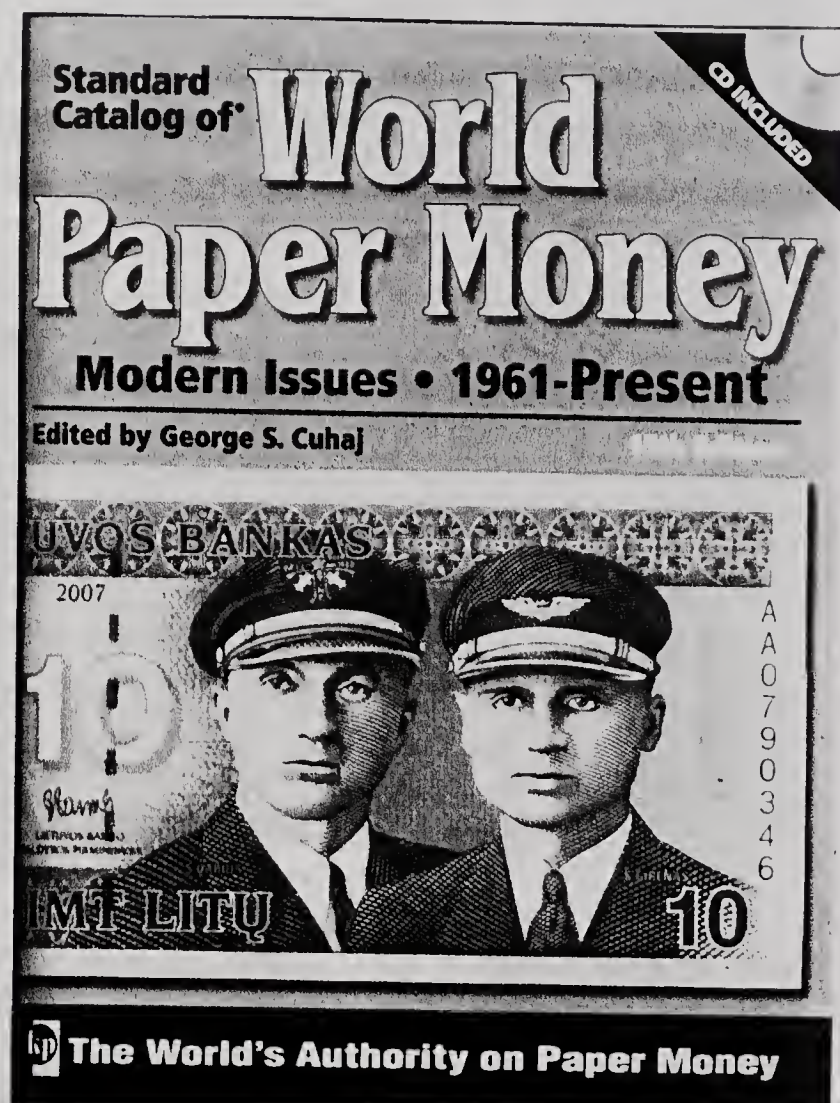
In what has to be one of the highest honors given to a Lithuanian banknote, the 15th edition of the 'Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, Modern Issues 1961-Present' features the Pick-68 2007 10 litų banknote on the front cover! This note shows the image of Lithuanian aviators Steponas Darius (left) and Stasys Girėnas (right). Darius is wearing his Palwaukee Airport cockade where he was a mechanic and taught aviation. The names 'MILWAUKEE' and '[PALA]TINE' can be seen on the cockade.

The catalog, of course, is published by Krause Publications in Iola, Wisconsin, and is edited by George S. Cuhaj. The catalog retails for \$55 and can be ordered from the publisher at www.krausebooks.com. A CD is included with the book.

The 2007 10 litų note is one of three denominations printed that year, the others being the 20 and 100 litų notes. The three notes were printed to replace their 2000 or 2001 counterparts when it became apparent that Lithuania would not be adopting the Euro currency.

The Lithuanian listings in the new catalog begins with the P-29 1991 0.10 talonas note and ends with the P-70 2007 100 litų note. Regarding pricing, most of the talonas series notes in UNC are listed for under \$10. The 1991 series litas banknotes in UNC are priced as follows: 10 litų - \$15 to \$25; 20 litų - \$30; 50 litų - \$65; and 100 litų - \$150.

Earlier this year, Krause issued its 'General Issues 1368-1960 12th Edition' version of the 'Standard Catalog of World Paper Money'. This "telephone book" size reference retails for \$80.00.



The pre-World War II litas banknotes issued by the Bank of Lithuania are on pages 813 to 817 of this volume. Of particular interest is the rare Pick-28 1938 10 litų note which is now listed with an UNC price of \$5,000. Prices are high in UNC for most of the notes, for example, the 1929 5 litų note and the 1930 20 litų note are both priced at \$300.

The German issued Eastern Bank State Loan Notes which were used in Lithuania from 1918 and 1922 are found on pages 575-576 of this volume, with prices that have escalated as a result of today's collectors' market.

A CENTENNIAL

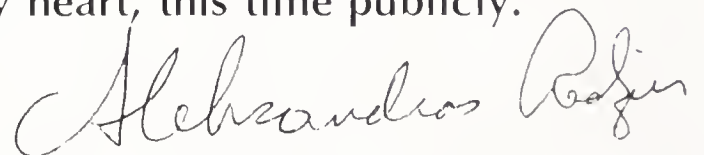
As we all know, the American Lincoln cent was designed by a Jewish-Lithuanian, Victor David Brenner (June 12, 1871 - April 5, 1924) (*Lith.* Viktoras Dovydas Brenneris) and, this year, 2009, is the 100th anniversary of the cent's introduction. The coin was introduced in 1909 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

Brenner was born in Šiauliai, Lithuanian on June 12, 1871, and picked up on his father's trade - engraving gems and seals. Brenner emigrated to the United States at age 19 and continued to apply his talents and skills in New York City. Brenner's work came to the attention of President Theodore Roosevelt who picked Brenner's earlier plaque with Lincoln's side relief as worthy for the commemorative coin. Brenner based his work on Mathew Brady's photograph of Lincoln.

On July 14, 1909, the Secretary of the Treasury, gave his approval for the Lincoln cent and on August 2, 1909, the new cent was released to the public.

Though Brenner's reverse was changed in 1959, the obverse is still with us 100 years later and it is the longest design used for any circulating American coin.

A few years back, Vince Alones, the patriarch of our organization, send your Director a specimen of the 1909 Lincoln cent. For this, I would like to again thank him from the bottom of my heart, this time publicly.



A FRAGMENT FROM THE WAR YEARS

In 1940, with a Russian invasion of Lithuania imminent, in preparation to retreating to the west, Lithuania's President Antanas Smetona was given a little less than \$10,000 in US dollars for travel expenses and as start-up money by Juozas Paknys of the Bank of Lithuania*. This was not extraordinary, other Lithuanian government officials were eligible for start-up money if they chose to retreat to the west.

The feeling at the time was that any retreat to west was temporary, that countries independent prior to the war would have their independence restored and that a war between the West and Russia was inevitable. Such was the feeling at the time, though only a Cold War came to pass.

To put this 1940's \$10,000 sum in perspective, during WWII a factory worker in the United States working at producing inflatable rubber tank decoys was paid 46 cents an hour, or almost \$1,000 per year - assuming a

40 hour work week. The tank decoys were used in Great Britain to fool the Germans into think that there were more American tanks in England than there actually were. An assistant draftsman working on machinery mechanical drawings earned \$25 for a 40 hour work week, or about \$1,300 per year. An aircraft manufacturing factory worker was paid 90 cent an hour, or about \$1,872 per year.

*Aušrotas, Bronius. Sunkių sprendimų metai (Years of difficult decisions). Draugas, Chicago, Illinois, 1985, p.188.

ADVERTISEMENTS

This is a FREE service to LNA members. List your needs here!

WANTED: Picture postcards of Lithuania, Klaipėda/Memel, pre-1941 only. Send photocopies or description with price to: J. R. Greene, 26 Bearsden Road, Athol, MA 01331.

WANTED: Lithuanian coins prior to 1708, especially gold. Please send me a list of what you have for my generous offer. Tony Tumonis, P.O. Box 89792, Tucson, AZ 85752. E-mail: lith57@aol.com.

WANTED: Lithuanian 1923 First National Census badge. Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224. E-mail: albionpf@hotmail.com.

WANTED: High grade early Lithuanian (pre-WWII) banknotes for personal collection. Robert Pletta, P.O. Box 480, Friendsville, MD 21531-0480. E-mail: rplett@gcnetmail.net.

FOR SALE: DOUBLE DIE 1936 silver Vytautas the Great 10 litų: #2 obverse and #4 reverse. Both \$55 each, XF condition. Frank Passic, 9000 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224, E-mail: albionfp@hotmail.com.

FOR SALE: Various Lithuanian silver 50 litų commemorative coins. Call us at (773) 583-6500 or e-mail us at giftshop@lithuanianmuseum.org to see what we have and for prices. Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture Gift Shop, 6500 S. Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60629.

ASSISTANCE OFFERED: Will look for and/or assist in obtaining collectable numismatic items in Lithuania. Contact by mail: Marius Urbalis; Kniaudiškių 50-10; LT-37123, Panevėžys; Lithuania or by e-mail: marius@filosofija.org

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